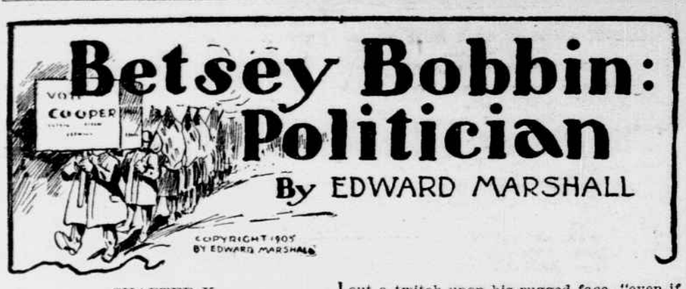


Betsey Bobbin: Politician

By EDWARD MARSHALL

CHAPTER X.

Excitement ran high during recess, and this interval was chosen as a time for consultation between Selkirk and Sam Bull, Cooper's managers. They believed that Musser was resorting to corrupt methods, but could not put their fingers on them. They were genuinely worried by the situation. The hall was deserted except by them, and they were alone there when Betsey Bobbin entered through the rear door, almost shyly, and beckoned to Selkirk. The two stood apart during a brief conversation, and Bull watched them. Suddenly he saw Selkirk slap his knee, evidently as a sign of extreme satisfaction, and shortly afterward Betsey Bobbin left the hall.

By that time the delegates were beginning to gather again for the afternoon session, and the two men had but a brief time for consultation.

"I think we've got it," said Selkirk. "All you will have to do will be to give me the privilege of the floor for one who is not a delegate."

Bull agreed to it and took his place before the chairman's desk with no further knowledge of the scheme than had been conveyed to him in this unsatisfactory statement.

"Are we ready to take another ballot?" he asked, after the expectant delegates had settled down to quiet.

Musser rose impressively to his feet. Sam waited for him to speak.

"Can I say a word or two, Mr. Chairman?" he asked.

Bull was both too fair and too politic to treat Musser with anything but courtesy, so he bowed lankily in his direction.

"Course ye kin," he said. Then he turned to the other delegates in a wandering glance that swept the hall and commented. "That's the way to talk to the chairman of this convention, you!" He turned again to Musser. "Course ye kin, Mr. Musser," he said again, and sat down.

"Gentlemen," said Musser, slowly and impressively, as he rolled his fat eyes about the hall.

There came a voice:

"Three cheers for Jacob Musser!"

They were given with good force, and Musser bowed again.

"Thank you," he said oilily. "Thank you, gentlemen."

And then he let his oratory loose. There were many "ums" and "ahs" in it, but it was not unskillful. It held the usual florid political rhetoric of the time. He even took a fling at England, which was cheered. He dilated upon the privilege of addressing such enlightened delegates, paid a tribute to the men who had made New Jersey "what she is, sir," remarked on the dignity of the office for which the man nominated by that convention would have an opportunity to compete; and, generally, made the eagle scream. Then he turned his attention to local issues and told how much he would do to further the special interests of Toms River if he were sent to Congress.

Finally he referred to the matter of the railway. Its construction, he announced, would bring money from New York and Philadelphia into the pockets of the "deestrick" (if a deestrick, figuratively, might be said to have sech things as pockets), and the railway would be of tremendous service to the community in many ways. He called the attention of the delegates to the fact that two sets of capitalists were competing for the franchise at that very moment, and that it behooved the voters to have a representative in Washington who, when the matter finally came up before Congress, would be able to jedge and differenshuate with keen intelligence between the merits of the plans proposed. He expressed his firm confidence in his own ability to thus jedge and differenshuate; but hinted, very solemnly, at grave doubts of Cooper's capacity along that line of thought. That one road must be built as soon as possible was his conviction, he announced, but jest which company was best he wa'n't noways willin' to give jedgement on at present. In summing up his oratorical flight he waxed eloquent.

"Toms River," he said, impressively, "has two great interests. One is them there new railroads. I have, in the interests of the voters of this deestrick, already had considerable correspondence with the men who are projectin' of 'em. Before I promise to give my vote for any of 'em, it shall be agreed, and solemnly, that on this section of their construction none but the men who have voted for me and other local draught animals shall be employed. I ain't goin' to have no outside help imported if I can help it. Toms River needs all the money that will be spent hereabouts, and there ain't no reason why Toms River shouldn't have it."

There was a little laugh at Musser's classification of his henchmen with "other local draught animals," but slips in English were not considered to be too important by the farmers and fishermen there assembled.

"And," said Musser, quite ignorant of the cause for the slight snicker which had gone around, "also, if I go to Congress I shall see to it that the Toms River claims receive attention and protection."

This was a burning subject, and there was more applause. There were pirates from the Chesapeake who trespassed in New Jersey waters, and this matter was under the control—or should have been—of the Congress at Washington. It was, at the time, a very live and real issue. More than once such trespassing had led to bloody battles between armed sloops, and the money loss of Jerseymen had been tremendous.

"I know all about clams," Musser continued, "even if I ain't a digger in the sands for them, but choose the law instead, as means to serve my fellow-citizens along." He looked around him at the listening delegates, and repeated:

"I know all about clams. I ought to. I've been brought up amongst 'em!"

And he sat down satisfied, while laughter mingled with the loud applause.

Slowly, and as if, like a spyglass, he was coming forth joint by joint, Cooper rose to answer, and was recognized by a nod from Chairman Bull. He made no effort to compete with Musser's elaborate diction.

He talked sense, and he talked it in a homely fashion. It had its effect upon the delegates, and it actually surprised Jack Selkirk and Cooper's admiring "women folks" up in the gallery. None of them had ever heard him make a speech before, for the good reason that he had never made a speech before. Mercy listened, with pride and love for her big, homely, sensible and rugged father showing in every line of her face. Bess glanced about from time to time with a smile of complete complacency. And Betsey! She leaned forward, fascinated, drinking in each word that fell from Cooper's lips as if it had expressed the regal wisdom of a king, and with her eyes wandering between his face and the back heads of the delegates below. Oh, how she wished that she might see their faces, while she wondered where he got his eloquence and what they thought of it.

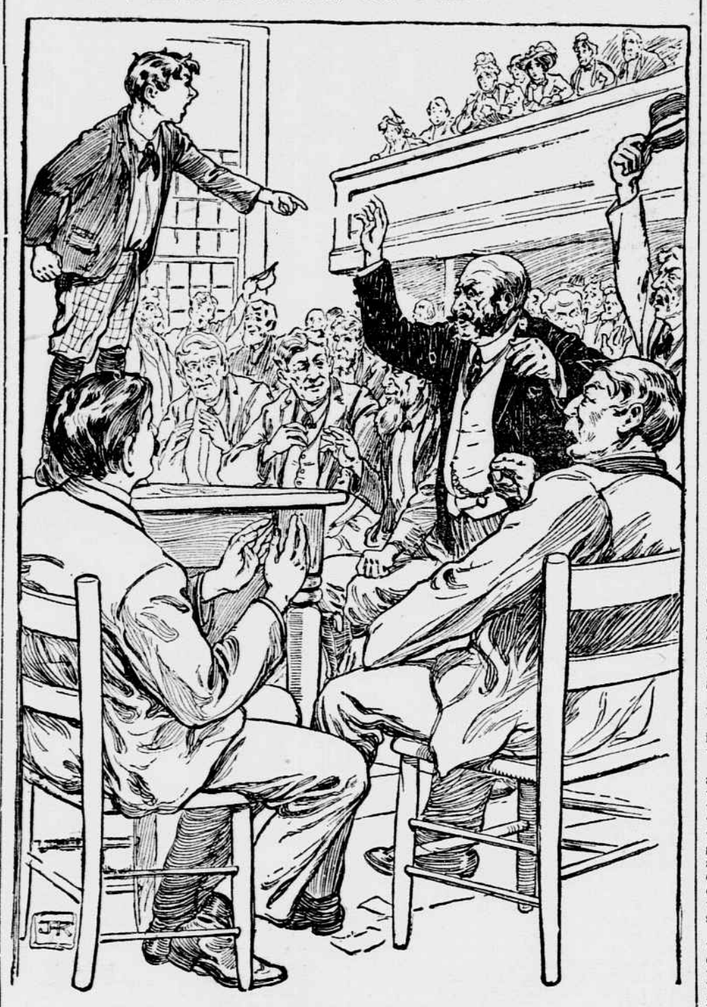
There was no doubt in the mind of the more fortunately situated Selkirk as he watched the faces of these delegates that the old man was impressing them. He could see that from their intent expressions and judge it from the sigh that most of them emitted when he paused. He saw, or believed that he saw, that Cooper had helped himself by what he had said, but he also saw, or thought he saw, his own surprise at the fact that the old man had not referred in any way to the little flings which Musser had thrown out at him reflected in the faces of the delegates. But Cooper's pause had not been, as he and almost every one in the hall had thought, an immediate precursor of an end of talking. Instead of sitting down he stood there and looked from his lank and towering height down upon the smirking and self-satisfied face of fat little Musser, and slowly grinned at him; grinned a grin of real amusement which seemed full of something near to pity.

"Mr. Musser had his say," he said, "and said it well. You know us both. The issues he brought strongly to your notice are important ones. He spoke of railroads. That was wise. But the detail that he dwelt on was the hosses that was to work upon the grades. And the Congress of the United States is a great body. He spoke about our oyster and our clam beds, and said that he was posted about clams because he'd lived amongst 'em here." Cooper raised his hand and swept a jolly, laughing gaze about the hall. "It was a hard name to call you voters who have been his friends and neighbors in Toms River."

There was a titter, and Musser's face got very red.

"And," Cooper continued calmly and without a twitch upon his rugged face, "even if it was true—even if you was clams and deeply interested in that fascinatin' bivalve because of blood relationship, as he assers—even that ain't real good argument for sendin' of another clam to Congress."

The convention roared with glee as Cooper took his seat, and Musser's face grew apoplectic red. Cooper had surprised the enemy. He had, indeed, surprised his friends. In a way it was a triumph, and Sam Bull and Selkirk caught each other's eyes in a glance of exultation. For a moment afterward Selkirk bent his head in thought until it almost touched his desk, while Bull looked at him furtively, expecting hints. Selkirk believed that that speech had captured the convention beyond the possibility of its being carried by Musser's dirty politics, but he was not sure. He decided that he would be neglecting an opportunity to help the man he really loved if he failed to add to its influence by carrying out Aunt Betsy Bobbin's plan. He rose to his feet slowly, touching Billy on the knee and giving him a warning look as he did so.



"THAT'S THE MAN," HE SAID.

"Mr. Chairman," he said, "I have to beg a favor of the convention."

The delegates watched him in surprise. Even Bull showed curiosity. For just a moment Musser's eyes flashed as if with hope that help had fallen down from heaven to him, but when he saw who it was that spoke he leaned back, wondering, as were the others of the audience.

"I am not a delegate to this convention," Selkirk said, "although I might have been. I am here, elected by your courtesy to be its secretary, more as a journalist than politician. But may I ask the privilege of the floor?"

"Will some one make a motion?" asked Sam Bull.

He let his eyes rove among the interested faces and stopped them as if casually on the countenance of the man he had arrangd with for this by-play. This man rose at once and made the motion. It was quickly carried, in spite of Musser's reddened face and sputtering objections. He had not the least idea what was coming, but he knew it might be dangerous.

Jack bowed.

"Thank you," said he. "Now I shall beg the further favor of the right to transfer that high privilege to another—a stranger in Toms River and one not accustomed to the deliberations of such assemblages as this. May I have it? The—the gentleman for whom I crave the privilege is not a politician, and is quite ignorant of formalities and rules, yet he has some things to say which I am sure you will agree are most important."

There were movements of intense curiosity throughout the hall, but Jack showed by neither word nor look who it was he had in mind. Sam Bull put the motion as he had before, and it was carried by a body of wide-awake and puzzled men.

Then it was that Selkirk lifted Billy Sticker until his swinging feet were firmly planted on the table top. Expressions of amazement and some criticism hummed through the hall. Some believed that Selkirk had played an elaborate joke upon their dignity, and that it should not be tolerated, but the vote had been given and could not be rescinded.

"This," said Selkirk, with his hand on Billy's waist, "is the gentleman of whom I spoke. His presence here is due to the fact that I have engaged him to help me—later—in the editing of the Express. Just now he is its errand boy, and does his work faithfully and well. What he has to say is something that you can all afford to listen to and something that you can all afford to ponder over. I have told him to merely tell his story. He has no idea of what it means to you or what its significance may be to the voters of this district."

Sam Bull grinned.

"Well, I reckon we can listen to what Bub has to say," he said, "if he don't take too much time."

"He won't," said Selkirk.

Billy was visibly embarrassed. For an instant his tongue refused to work. Then his eye caught that of Betsey Bobbin in the gallery, and sitting next to her were Mercy and Bess Cooper. They were friendly faces, and they reassured him. And when, next to them, he saw his mother sitting and saw that she was smiling in encouragement, he grinned at her and regained his self-command.

"Say, fellers," he said slowly, and a titter went about the hall to which he gave an answering grin, "you don't know me. I ain't no great shakes, and I never spoke before a crowd before. I'm just a kid that tramped it from New York here with his ma and looked for work along the way. We only found it yesterday, when we was pretty nearly starved. Now I don't know as what I'm goin' to say will have any great effect here on this cauckiss, or whatever it may be, but I hope it will. You see, it was like this: Ma and me, we started from New York two weeks ago to look for work or find my father. I ain't never seen my father. We struck hard times most all the way. There ain't no work for us between here and New York city. Ma could get a-plenty, but they said they wouldn't have a woman with a child, although I could have worked all right, and am a-workin' now in Mr. Selkirk's office. We had to scratch round pretty lively to git enough to eat, and then we didn't get it. But it was right here in Toms River that we run against the hardest graft of all. It was noon, I guess, or maybe not, when we was comin' down about half a mile from here. There was a house with green blinds on it—"

At this point Jacob Musser, who had been watching the proceedings with startled curiosity, seemed suddenly to have had it satisfied, and sprang quickly to his feet. He shouted:

"Mr. Chairman, I protest." He gazed with startled eyes around at the delegates. "Gentlemen," he said, appealing to them, "I protest. This boy—this ragamuffin—is wasting this convention's time."

Bull started as if to speak, but Billy was too quick for him. The youngster's eyes flashed fire.

"It ain't no fault of your'n I ain't a ragamuffin!" he exclaimed, addressing Musser personally.

There was a general titter. Billy turned to the delegates with a gesture of appeal. He was really an impassioned little figure as he stood there on Jack's desk. Selkirk had hoped that Betsey Bobbin's plan would work, but he had had no idea of its dramatic possibilities.

"Feller delegates, shall I go on?" said Billy, quite unconsciously adopting the phrase that he had heard the other speakers use.

"Yes, yes, go on!" came from all parts of the room amid the laughter. "Go on, go on!"

Billy bobbed his thanks to them in a very jerky bow. There was no amusement on his face. It was strained and white. The reality of his righteous wrath no one could doubt who looked at him. He stood there like a half-grown vengeance.

Musser seated himself again under the fire of many curious eyes, whose owners wondered why the man should so oppose the little speaker.

"Well," continued Billy, "we stopped at that there house with them green blinds. We thought the cuss that lived there—it looked so nice and comferble—would be decent. I wanted to work out a night's lodgin' for my ma and grub for both of us. She was too much tuckered out to work for anythin'."

"Why Billy!" exclaimed a startled voice up in the gallery.

The whole convention turned and looked to see Mrs. Sticker, pale, sad-eyed, astonished, gazing at her son.

But Billy paid no heed to her. The only comment was from the chairman's desk. Sam Bull, looking at the little figure on the desk, said slowly and with real sympathy a tremble in his voice:

"Pore little feller!"

"I went up to that house," continued Billy, "and asked the man when he come to the back door, as polite and nice as I knowed how, to help us out. I told him that I was more than willin' to do anything I could and that he wanted to have done, so's't I could pay for what we et and give him somethin' over for the place we slept in. Kind of rent, you know."

Sam Bull by this time leaned far over from his desk. His lanky form was rigid in his interest as he gazed down upon the boy. The story was not quite as new to him as he would have had it seem, but its telling was quite unexpected, and his look sent through the hall a feeling that a matter of great importance was impending. The place was almost breathless as he asked:

"What did he say?"

The words were uttered solemnly. It was as if a question had been put in court to some witness whose testimony would convict or save. Billy's eyes ashed as he looked back at him. Then they showed a litle glint of mischief.

"I can't quite say it here," he answered slowly, "for there is ladies in the gallery. But he told me—yes, I will—he said that I could go to hell and git somethin' nice and hot to eat there if the devil'd give it to me."

There were murmurs from the audience, and Musser half rose from his seat. But Billy had not finished. He looked about him slowly, and then he added, solemnly, intensely:

"And—he set his dog on ma!"

There was a thrill of scorn and accusation in his boyish voice, as he stood there on that desk making a plain statement of real fact which the most eloquent and able public speaker could not have counterfeited. Not a person in the hall could doubt his truth, or doubt the presence in his youthful heart of that bright spark of manliness that warns every decent human male of the unworthiness of warring upon women. He made no complaint about the lack of common charity which had met him when he had been unable to take away entirely the signs of want that showed upon his pinched and earnest face.

The delegates who had sat absorbed during his crude recital, still were tense there in their places, waiting. It was observable that almost all of them were leaning forward slightly in their seats, and more than one pair of grarled hands gripped the rail in front of them with force enough to drive the blood out from their knuckles and leave them whitened spots upon the sunburned skin. There had been an honest earnestness of condemnation in what the boy had said, an inward ring of truth in his recital that had affected everybody. He did not ask for pity, and few felt it for him then, but the righteous wrath that glistened in his face was really hypnotic.

Sam Bull broke the silence, and he voiced the sentiments of nearly every man there present with his muttered:

"The d——n cuss!"

Instantly Billy spoke again, and the hush which, in another second would have been broken by an uproar, fell once more complete.

"Hold on there!" he said, warningly. "Do you know who that man was?"

Musser was squirming in his seat and burst out foolishly, with:

"I protest!"

Men who did not even take their eyes from off the boy long enough to look at the man hushed him to silence.

"Who do you suppose he was?" said Billy Sticker.

And as the last word of the question left his tense, small mouth, he raised his hand and pointed.

"That's the man," he said.

And the steady finger forced attention full on Jacob Musser.

"You lie," cried Musser, angrily.

A protesting murmur rose from all parts of the hall, but Billy scarcely glanced at him. It was as if the little fat man had filled his place in the proceedings of the day and now was not important.

"No, I don't. You know I don't" he answered, very calmly, and then he started to speak again.

"But I ain't told all my story," he continued in a much different voice.

"Go on! Go on!" said Bull, and others echoed it.

"Well," Billy said, "we went—my ma and me did—and found a haystack and slept under it. We didn't have no grub, because she wouldn't let me ask at any other house after that. All she could do was jest to hug me tight and cry. You know how women is. They can't stand things the way us men can."

There was scarce a laugh at this, so completely had the youngster assumed there in his listeners' mind the role of protector of his mother.

"Well," he continued, "we walked down the road a piece next day—that's yesterday. There was another house. I just had to go in there, because ma fainted in the orchard. It made me almost sick to see her layin' there when I knew all she needed was just grub. I knowed it wasn't nothin' worse than hunger—but say, fellers, do you know that nothin' ain't much worse than hunger?" He paused. "I don't suppose you do," he added.

A flicker of a smile was on his face as he looked at them and added:

"You look too fat and hearty!"

A murmur went around the hall, but it was not mirth exactly.

"Well," continued Billy, taking a deep breath, "I made my mind up that I was a-goin' to get her somethin' if I had to steal it. It don't sound nice, but that's the way I felt. A feller come along and went into that other house. I didn't speak to him—I was afraid of dogs. You see, I didn't know but all you Jersey folks was just alike. I sneaked in after him. I was a-loadin' up with grub when I let a plate fall out of my fingers and got ketched."

Musser had reached the limit of endurance. He did not rise, but he said, and afterward regretted it:

"You see, he acknowledges that he's a thief."

Billy turned upon him like a little wildcat. Again that small, accusing finger pointed at him.

"Yes," said he, "I was a-stealin', and it's jest sech men as you that makes folks steal."

He turned again to the delegates as a whole while Musser struggled hard to find words with which to meet the onslaught of this small and unexpected Nemesis.

"I said that I got caught in that house as I tried to hook some grub," he went on, conversationally, not deigning even another look at Musser as he talked. Then he paused again, and there was no sign that any one there in that hall desired to interrupt his little silence.

"What do you suppose that that man did to me?" he asked at length.

Still Musser had not learned his lesson.

"Licked you as you well deserved, I hope," he said.

It was a mistake, but before the delegates had had a chance to tell him that with shouts and groans Billy, earnestly, quietly and with as much effectiveness in his untutored manner as any carefully trained orator could have thrown into the words—an effectiveness of quiet that almost made his hearers catch their breath—went on:

"That's where Mr. Musser's wrong. That's what he'd a-done. You'd have to look for any man to do that that would set his dog onto a woman. But that other man, he ain't that sort. He fed us so's't we wouldn't have to steal. He give us beds to sleep in. Ma's goin' to help around his house till somethin' better comes along, and he—he got me a job down to the office of the newspaper, and I'm goin' to earn enough to pay him back for what I stole. That's what!"

He paused again, while the faces of his auditors relaxed and smiled at one another. Then again the small arm and pointing fingers were thrust out, not accusingly this time, but with a certain air of pride and gratitude.

"And there," he said, pointing to the flushing Cooper, "is that man."

There was the beginning of a cheer, but it was quickly stopped when it was seen that Billy had not finished speaking.

"Now, fellers," said Billy, with a smile, and with no apparent knowledge that he was outraging the dignity of the convention by thus designating solemn delegates, "I don't know what a man in Congress has to do, and I don't know what sort ought to go there, but, if it ain't a penitentiary, it seems to me that I'd vote a gee sight quicker to send a man to it that give a chunk of mince pie to a hungry kid than I would for one that hollered him away and sicked the dog onto a woman."

For an instant he stood there looking at them. His face was white, and not a man doubted that he had been talking from true experience and his heart. There had been many little details in his speech and its delivery that no report could reproduce—details that proved its honesty and earnestness. There was a silent pause. Then Jack Selkirk, who had been not less absorbed than were the others, held out his arms and, with his hands on them, Billy jumped down to the floor.

The tears shone in his eyes at last, but they had not been there while he had spoken. He fought them bravely and turned his face up toward the platform so that only Bull could see them.

Musser, half strangled by his wrath, sat silent and staring. Cooper was very red, and looked the picture of complete discomfort. In the gallery there was not a whisper. Even the hoodlums were quite silent. Mercy's eyes were bright and winking, and Bess leaned back upon the bench with a flushed face and her arms stretched tensely to the rail before her. Betsey Bobbin, with blazing cheeks and eyes that winked faster than most eyes could, stared at the ceiling of the hall.

Suddenly there was an uproar of applause. Bull checked it with a gesture and stepped forward off the platform. He spoke quietly and his voice choked a little. He also winked his eyes for some unstated reason. His words seemed almost as if they were a continuation of the boy's.

"And so would we," he said, not very loudly, to the delegates. "Now, wouldn't we?"

An approving roar rushed toward him, and from one of the back seats a man rose up to shout:

"I move we nominate Caleb Cooper by acclamation! A risin' vote!"

"I second it! I second it!" another voice called loudly.

Bull went behind his desk again and after picking up his gavel said:

"Is it the will of this convention that Caleb Cooper be unanimously and by acclamation named as our candidate for Congress?"

"Aye! Aye!"

"Yes! Yes!"

The cheering came from everywhere. In that same voice that had spoken from the rear before there came in strident tones:

"You bet!"

And instantly every delegate in the hall, excepting only Caleb Cooper and Jake Musser, had risen to his feet.

Pandemonium had broken loose. At last Musser rose and waved his arms and shouted protests, but no one heeded them. The first words heard were those of Bull, who roared above the tumult:

"Then let's elect him, too!"

And with no more formal motion of parliamentary procedure the convention separated into yelling groups of enthusiastic men, all trying to get hold of Cooper's hand to shake it or struggling in the press which surged about the almost smothered form of Billy Sticker.

Probably Jack Selkirk was the only person in the hall who tried to catch the eye of Betsey Bobbin. But he tried and easily succeeded, for her eye was seeking his. There was profound respect in the way he waved his hand to her and bowed.

"Aunt Betsey did it!" he said a moment later to Sam Bull.

"She did, by gosh!" said Bull.

(To be continued.)

A Horse's Memory.

From the London Mail.

The least hurt and the most valuable of the three horses attached to the pantechnicon which came into collision with Sir Thomas Hanbury's motor car between Limpsfield and Westerham two weeks ago was yesterday repassing the spot where the accident occurred when the animal neighed several times and dropped dead. The horse had not worked since the accident until yesterday.

The Subjection of Thomas.

From the New York Sun.

Jefferson groaned dismally.

"And I am the man who wrote the Declaration of Independence!"

Herewith he proceeded to dig up for the janitor, bootblack, elevator man, waiter, barber and ninety-eight others.

As to Pa's Drawing.

From Puck.

"Remember, my daughter, that marriage is but a lottery."

"Why, papa, to hear you talk like that, one would say you thought ma was a blank."

Mrs. Neverholm—Ah! Good morning. Out shopping?

Mrs. Gaddabout—No; I'm out buying today.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A WORLD PROBLEM

To Furnish Cities With Adequate Water Supply.

NO TRIFLING MATTER

CONDITIONS IN EUROPE EVEN WORSE THAN HERE.

Daily Consumption Per Capita — New York Hard Put to It—In Other Towns.

Written for The Evening Star.

Ask the average resident of a big city what is the most pressing municipal problem, and in all likelihood he will answer, "Rapid transit." Put the same question to a prominent city official, and almost certainly his reply will be, "Water."

That city is the exception today which is not face to face with the serious problem of water supply; and quite a few there are that have solved the enigma of transportation. Even cities seemingly ideally located do not escape it. Chicago, with a great fresh water lake to draw from, had to spend millions not so long ago on a drainage canal to carry the city's sewage southwestward into the Illinois and Mississippi rivers, in order to keep the waters of Lake Michigan free of pollution. When she had done this, Chicago thought the water problem was solved, but St. Louis promptly objected to having her source of water supply possibly contaminated in this manner, and began fighting the improvement in court, and Chicago is awaiting the outcome with fear and trembling.

Philadelphia, with two big rivers to draw from, the Delaware and the Schuylkill, finds the waters of both shockingly polluted by the towns situated above her on the rivers, and now she is spending something like twenty millions of dollars on huge sand filtration plants, in the hope that this improvement will put a stop to the ravages of typhoid that frequently sweep the city.

Cleveland, to get away from sewage-contaminated water, has lately been compelled to go farther out toward the center of Lake Erie; and as the city grows the intake will undoubtedly have to be carried out still farther. This has been the experience of all the great lake cities, situated though they are with the finest fresh water source in the world at their very doors.

Run over the list of American cities and there is scarcely one that can be mentioned which is not deep in the task of attempting to solve a water problem, or, once having solved it, is waging an incessant battle to keep the supply uncontaminated, a condition that results only from eternal vigilance and the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

World-Wide Problem.

But the water problem is not local to America. It is world-wide. Bad as it is here in many localities, it is even worse in the crowded centers of Europe.

Paris does not dare to drink the water of the Seine, which is used for industrial and street purposes only, and has gone into the mountains for table water. Now this supply, with the growth of the city, is becoming too small, and Paris is face to face with the question: "Where shall we turn now; shall we at last have to come to filtered Seine water?" And Paris, knowing the fearful state of the Seine, sickens at the stomach at thought of such a contingency. Yet in all probability Paris will have to come to filtered Seine water; the other cities and towns about her have gobbled up all the mountain water sources near and far, and every stream and river of the plains reeks with the sewage of the towns and cities along its course.

The same condition prevails in the rivers of England, and they are so interlocked by canals that the sewage of the hundreds of cities situated along their banks is distributed with equal impartiality among the various water courses. As a result, Manchester has had to go to the lochs of Scotland for water, and has spent millions thereby. London, until recently in the grasp of private water monopolies, which have been bought out by the corporation, is seriously considering the plan of going all the way to Wales for a decent tumbler of water, at a cost of a round hundred millions of dollars. As for Glasgow, in the land of lochs, it has been compelled to spend more millions than it ever dreamed of putting into municipal transit in order to insure itself a sweet water supply.

Per Capita Consumption.

To what state these European cities would be brought over water if their residents insisted on consuming as much water as the average resident of an American city consumes is hard to conjecture. In Philadelphia the daily consumption per capita averages 236 gallons; in Chicago, 180; in New York, 125; in Brooklyn, 90. A Londoner is allowed only 45 gallons daily; a Parisian, 37, and the citizen of Berlin, which has the best of all continental water systems, holds the per capita consumption down to 50 gallons.

That is the almost unheard-of European municipality which does not turn off the flow of water into houses a good portion of the day, the argument being that there are only certain hours of the day when water is really essential to well being; for example, around meal time and for the Saturday night tubbing. If Manchester, for instance, were to let its residents draw freely upon the water supply twenty-four hours a day Manchester knows full well that her present system, installed at an enormous cost, would be altogether inadequate and would have to be doubled, to say the least, and this could scarcely be done without an infringement upon the rights of other corporations or individuals.

In this country the problem of obtaining additional or new sources of water supply for cities is greatly aggravated in the more populous sections, such as the middle states, by the circumstance that no one city can secure more water without, so to speak, tramping on the toes of some other city or town, or crippling various industries to the point of destruction.

New York's Supply.

New York city, which is casting around for a supplemental water supply, and knows that it will have to spend $100,000,000 or more to get it, finds itself hampered in this fashion.

The metropolis has the power of eminent domain and right of condemnation, and it got its present source of water supply in this fashion, condemning thousands of acres of land along the watersheds of the Croton, Bronx and Byram rivers, wiping out hundreds of farms, scores of villages and towns, and numerous manufacturing industries dependent on the water power furnished by these streams. When it became apparent several years ago that the present water supply would not be sufficient to tide the city over a dry season, and the authorities began considering plans for condemning more watersheds, the people of Dutchess county began an agitation against such a proceeding, declaring that it would wreak untold misery on the community by destroying the factories on which the smaller towns in the interior depended for existence. But New York went ahead with her plans, with the result that last year the Dutchess county people got a bill put through the state legislature forbidding the city to take water from the watersheds of the county, on the grounds as outlined.

This year other counties above New York, fearful that the city will try to condemn their watersheds, are endeavoring to have similar bills passed relating to them, and the chances are that the legislature will pass them.

Under State Control.

In the meantime, there is an agitation on foot looking toward the formation of a state water commission with authority to divide the state into districts and to say from what district this city or that town is privileged to draw its water. The waters of the state, declare the advocates of this bill, among whom is Governor Higgins, belong not to New York city, or Buffalo, or Syracuse, but to the people at large. They are for the general good and affect it as they are diverted for this purpose or that. New York city, for example, pays a money damage for all the lands it condemns—pays as much and probably more than the lands are actually worth—but there is a greater damage that cannot be compensated for by mere money. This is the damage to the general good brought about by causing hundreds, often thousands of people to leave their homes of a lifetime, to give up their businesses, and to start life over again in strange communities. The general good is of far more importance than the possession of an adequate water supply by New York, though we do not belittle the latter. Still, we feel certain that New York can attain her object and at the same time the rights of others and the general good be zealously guarded; and we feel that a state water commission would bring this about.

Her Only Hope.

With all the adjacent counties getting bills passed keeping the metropolis from their watersheds, this is New York's only hope, and it will make the city go clear to the Adirondacks for all the water it may find use for in the future, in addition to that now supplied by present sources, which is around 340,000,000 gallons daily. The city's total yearly consumption is in the neighborhood of one hundred and twenty-five billion gallons; the storage capacity in fourteen lakes and reservoirs is forty-five billion gallons, while at least thirty-five billion more gallons in reserve, above the thirty-two billions now being arranged for, would be necessary, at the present rate of consumption, to tide the city over a dry season and prevent a water famine. This does not take into account the demands constantly being made by increased population and industries. One new industry not long ago made application for 2,000,000 gallons of water daily, while the population is being added to at the rate of 100,000 yearly, which means a daily increase in consumption of 12,500,000 gallons, on the basis of 125 gallons per capita.

New York's water department officials say that the city is fast approaching the day when it will be called upon to furnish its citizens with 500,000,000 gallons for daily consumption.

Lately various commissions of experts, official and unofficial, have been trying to ascertain the best source for the additional supply that is needed badly even now, for no man knoweth when a dry season may be at hand. Nearly every watershed of the state has been investigated, and scheme on scheme has been reported and recommended until even the officials have become so swamped with statistics and propositions and counter-propositions that they are well nigh bewildered.

From Mountain Streams.

One of the latest schemes—that recently outlined by the commission of engineers appointed by Mayor McClellan—would have the city tap the streams of the Catskills and bring the waters down to Manhattan Island by aqueduct at a cost of something like $91,000,000. But this plan would seriously interfere with the industries and water supply of five cities, and the more scattered industries of five counties; and these communities and interests are bitterly opposed to the plan, and are fighting it before the legislature.

If the city is at last compelled to go to the Adirondacks, 150 miles away, it will do so at an expense of over $150,000,000 for water rights, aqueducts and reservoirs, but it will certainly secure an unlimited supply, whereas the Catskill supply will solve the problem for only twenty years to come. In the Adirondacks there are few industries to be injured, almost no towns, and all that would be necessary to add 100,000,000 gallons or so to a daily supply of, say, five hundred millions, would be to extend the aqueduct a little farther into the heart of the mountain waste.

For the General Good.

This plan of distributing the waters of a state for the general good is of recent growth. Massachusetts may be called the leader in it. Boston and the towns round about had so much trouble adjusting water differences arising from continual encroachment on the part of all the communities on the rights of others that the legislature created a metropolitan water board for this district, whose duty is to say what water Boston can use and what this or that town can take. The scheme is working excellently, and in the opinion of experts is one that all American cities, with the growth of population, the multiplication of suburbs and the increase of industries in adjacent territory, must be put under sooner or later. Then the cost of securing water, great as it is now, will be infinitely increased, for cities will undoubtedly be compelled to go far a-field, to such remote regions as the Adirondacks, where there are slight chances of interfering with the rights of others.

Some idea of the immensity of the undertakings necessary to secure water for an American city may be gained from the work that the city of New York is doing in the Croton watershed.

An Enormous Undertaking.

Since 1892 the city has been building near Croton-on-the-Hudson a dam for a reservoir whose length is 1½ miles; area, 3,425 acres, and capacity, 32,000,000,000 gallons. The length of the dam proper is 1,300 feet, of the spillway, 1,000 feet; its lowest point of foundation is 134 feet below, and its top 166 feet above the bed of the river; while its thickness of masonry at the base is 216 feet, and on the dam's top is a roadway 20 feet wide. This is the biggest piece of stone work undertaken since the pyramids were built, and it will take two years to fill the reservoir behind it. The water was turned into the reservoir only a few weeks ago, the work still to be done on the dam being along the top.

A million cubic yards of stone have already been used, and a half million more must be put in place before the dam can be called completed. The stone has been brought from a quarry seven miles away, over a railroad specially constructed for the purpose, and 1,500 men have been at work on dam and reservoir excavations for several years past. This improvement has called for the condemnation of numerous farm lands, one village entirely and a part of another, and scores of factories have been compelled to suspend. Already the dam alone has cost the city $8,000,000 and the land for the reservoir millions more. To date New York's present system of water supply has eaten up a cool hundred million dollars, exclusive of the million annually necessary for maintenance.

Big as is the rapid transit problem to the American city, it affects the city alone; but the water problem has always affected and is more and more affecting not only the city, but the welfare of the contiguous country for a constantly increasing number of miles beyond. Water is, indeed, the modern city's bete noir.

LOOKING ALONG THE TOP OF THE CROTON DAM.

A Human Bloodhound.

From the Kansas City Times.

Deputy Marshal "Bud" Ledbetter saw at Muskogee a negro acting suspiciously, and sternly demanded that the negro tell him "where that whisky was." This frightened the negro, who pointed the way to where a crowd of negroes were drinking and playing craps. After their arrest one of the negroes asked Ledbetter how he knew there was whisky in the neighborhood. "Well," replied Ledbetter, "I was sitting in my office at the court house and I scented whisky in your direction. I followed the scent for a block and lost it because the wind changed. I threw up my head and sniffed the air and caught the trail again, which led directly to this negro." "By de great guns, niggahs," said the negro, rolling his eyes and with a look of awe on his face, "dis heah offisah am a regular human bloodhound."

"AT ONE FELL SWOOP."

From Punch.

Wife—"Well, did ye find th' puddin' I left for you in the saucepan?"
Collier (whose favorite dish is boiled puddings)—"Oh, ay; I found it right enough. It were a stunner!"
Wife—"Did you take the cloth off?"
Collier (after a pause)—"Were there a cloth on?"